Oswald widow relieved by exhumation

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ROCKWALL, Texas — The exhumation and identification of Lee Harvey Oswald's body was like a "cleansing medicine" that washed away years of speculation, his former wife, Marina Oswald Porter, said Monday.

"I'm walking around here with a smile on my face. It's like getting rid of a disease," she said.

The Russian-born Mrs. Porter, now married to Rockwall carpenter Kenneth Porter, said the exhumation of Oswald's body Sunday from Fort Worth's Rose Hill Burial Park put to rest a British author's "crazy" claim that Oswald was being impersonated by a Russian spy when arrested in the Nov. 22, 1963, assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Mrs. Porter also said the positive identification of Oswald's body squelched her own fear that the body had been disinterred and secretly cremated by federal authorities years ago.

"It's like you have this disease," she said. "For a long time, you don't do anything about it, then you go and have surgery, and everything turns out fine."

The surprise exhumation, which began early Sunday, ended three years of courtroom litigation stemming from British author Michael Eddowes' repeated requests for a new autopsy to prove what became known as the "Oswald spy-theory."

Eddowes, in his book *The Oswald File*, contended that Oswald, who defected to Russia in 1959, was replaced by a Soviet agent who returned to the United States, shot the president, and then was shot and killed by Jack Ruby.

Mrs. Porter said the cost of the exhumation and examination, estimated at $10,000 to $12,000, will be paid by Eddowes.

Mrs. Porter personally had sought the exhumation in August to end the controversy and speculation for the sake of Oswald's two surviving daughters. The daughters — Rachel Oswald, 17, a senior at Rockwall High School, and June Oswald, 19, a journalism student at the University of Texas in Austin — were forbidden to attend the exhumation Sunday, Mrs. Porter said.

She said a friend, mistakenly identified as one of the daughters, attended the exhumation with her.

Since the examination, the 40-year-old Mrs. Porter said she has been besieged by inquiries about videotapes she ordered of the 4-hour examination. Emphasizing the tapes were taken "to make sure nothing went wrong," she said the findings mean she will not need the tapes.

"They will be destroyed as soon as all the reports are made official," she said.

Mrs. Porter said she now plans to go back to work and "try to forget.

"There are no more questions in my mind."